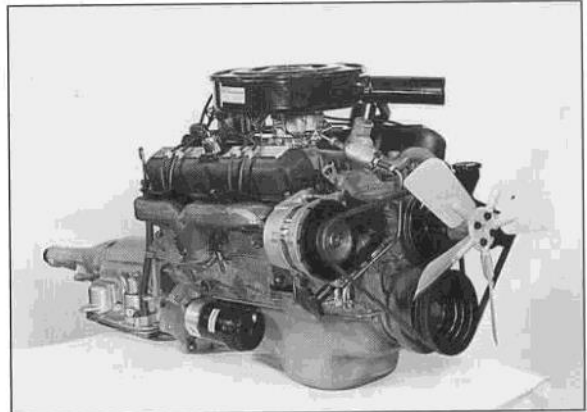


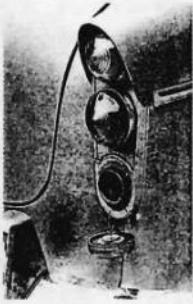
The V8 Super Snipe. These rare photographs of the prototype show the proposed badging and the comparatively tight fit of the Chrysler engine in the Super Snipe engine bay. A third photograph shows the engine out of the car with the specially made exhaust manifolds which enabled the unit to be "shoehorned" into the bodyshell.

Below are the comparative performance figures for the Super Snipe and the V8 recorded by the test engineers in 1966. The overall performance of the V8 was only a marginal improvement on the straight six, with a noticeable deterioration in fuel consumption.



OFFICIAL PERFORMANCE VEHICLE PERFORMANCE DATA		SHEET NO	44
		ISSUE NO AND DATE	1. 19.1.66
MODEL:- SUF IN SHIP V8 SALOON			
TEST WEIGHT (KERB WEIGHT + 400 LBS.)	3972	MAKE & TYPE	Dunlop 101 nylon
POWER CURVE NOS		TYRES	SIZE 6.70 x 15
AXLE RATIO	3.54	PRESSURES	
GEARBOX RATIOS	1st:- 2.45:1 2nd:- 1.45:1 3rd:- - TOP:- 1:1		
TOP GEAR ACCELERATION (SECONDS)	20-40 30-60 40-60 50-70 60-80 70-80 80-100	NOTES:- ALL FIGURES TAKEN USING PREMIUM FUEL. THE PERFORMANCE SHOWN REPRESENTS A FULLY RUN-IN VEHICLE WITH THE STATED TEST WEIGHT AND AN ACCURATE SPEEDOMETER. ACCEPTABLE FIGURES FOR TESTS ON NON RUN-IN VEHICLES ARE AS FOLLOWS:- a) A MAXIMUM SPEED 5% LOWER THAN THAT QUOTED. b) AVERAGE SPEED FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES 2 M.P.G. WORSE THAN THOSE QUOTED. c) STEADY SPEED FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES 5% WORSE THAN THOSE QUOTED.	
ACCELERATION THROUGH GEARS (SECONDS)	0-30 3.4 - 3.9 0-40 5.5 - 6.3 0-60 8.4 - 9.2 0-80 12.1 - 13.3 0-70 16.0 - 17.6 0-80 22.0 - 24.2 0-80 0-100	REMARKS:- Converter Shell Ratio 2.20	
MAX. SPEED (MEAN 1/4 MILE)	101 - 104 MPH		
FUEL CONSUMPTION AT STEADY SPEED IN TOP GEAR (M.P.G.)	30 28.0 40 25.4 50 22.0 60 20.0 70 17.8 80 15.5 90 13.5 100	COMPILED BY	R. J. LLOYD
FUEL CONSUMPTION AT AVERAGE SPEED ON EDGE HILL COURSE (M.P.G.)	30 36 19.5 - 22.5 40 45 14.0 - 17.0	APPROVED BY	J. J. LLOYD
OVERALL FUEL CONSUMPTION	M.P.G.	ISSUED BY ENGINEERING TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT.	

OFFICIAL PERFORMANCE VEHICLE PERFORMANCE DATA		SHEET NO	41
		ISSUE NO AND DATE	1 (6.5.66)
MODEL:- SUPER SNIPE V OVERDRIVE (7.5 : 1 G.F.)			
TEST WEIGHT (KERB WEIGHT + 400 LBS.)	3972	MAKE & TYPE	DUNLOP 041R
POWER CURVE NOS	184	TYRES	SIZE 6.70 x 15
AXLE RATIO	4.22	PRESSURES	PSI PSI
GEARBOX RATIOS	1st:- 2.80:1 2nd:- 1.45:1 3rd:- - TOP:- 1.0 D/D TOP .778 REV. 1.177		
TOP GEAR ACCELERATION (SECONDS)	20-40 8.7 - 9.7 30-60 9.1 - 10.1 40-60 9.8 - 10.8 50-70 11.3 - 12.4 60-80 14.4 - 15.8 70-80 80-100	NOTES:- ALL FIGURES TAKEN USING PREMIUM FUEL. THE PERFORMANCE SHOWN REPRESENTS A FULLY RUN-IN VEHICLE WITH THE STATED TEST WEIGHT AND AN ACCURATE SPEEDOMETER. ACCEPTABLE FIGURES FOR TESTS ON NON RUN-IN VEHICLES ARE AS FOLLOWS:- a) A MAXIMUM SPEED 5% LOWER THAN THAT QUOTED. b) AVERAGE SPEED FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES 2 M.P.G. WORSE THAN THOSE QUOTED. c) STEADY SPEED FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES 5% WORSE THAN THOSE QUOTED.	
ACCELERATION THROUGH GEARS (SECONDS)	0-30 5.0 - 6.0 0-40 8.5 - 9.5 0-50 11.5 - 12.6 0-60 15.6 - 17.2 0-70 21.8 - 24.0 0-80 0-100	REMARKS:- See Sheet 21 for Direct Drive Top Gear Steady Speed Fuel Consumptions. * TIRE PRESSURE USED BY EXPERIMENTAL FOR THIS TEST.	
MAX. SPEED (MEAN 1/4 MILE)	97 - 100 MPH		
FUEL CONSUMPTION AT STEADY SPEED IN TOP GEAR (M.P.G.)	30 { 26.8 40 { 25.9 50 { 24.2 60 { 23.0 70 { 20.8 80 { 18.1 90 100	COMPILED BY	John Dyer
FUEL CONSUMPTION AT AVERAGE SPEED ON EDGE HILL COURSE (M.P.G.)	30 36 22 - 25 40 20 - 23 45	APPROVED BY	J. J. LLOYD
OVERALL FUEL CONSUMPTION	M.P.G.	ISSUED BY ENGINEERING TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT.	



Super Snipe cabin is richly trimmed with massive leather bench seat, veneered dash and door cappings

would expect. Barrelling into Shepherd's Bush roundabout the Humber kneels heavily on its front springs but once you take up the about-centre lag in the feather-light steering – buttock-muscles gripping leather to maintain purchase against roll – and feed in some lock, response is more positive. Soon you are hustling the car through traffic, out-

psyching buses and taxis and oblivious to the steering's lack of feel or effort and the determined understeer. Still, I reckon Raymond Baxter was a brave man to take a car like the Snipe to a class win on the '61 RAC.

A big dial by the driver's right knee controls the Armstrong Selectaride rear dampers – hard, soft and two settings in between. It is floaty but supremely comfortable on 'soft', tauter with less roll on 'hard'.

I briefly drove Martin Fortune's Humber Hawk, though a slipping clutch prevented an extensive run. With neither the Snipe's power steering or automatic transmission it is a far heavier, more old-fashioned feeling machine and with only 75bhp to pull 35cwt the 2.3 litre long-stroke 'four' is struggling. Still, it's a willing unit with decent torque, which at least means you don't have use the awkward column change over-much.

Martin has owned the car – a Series Ia – for five years and finds it ideal roomy transport for taking relaxed holidays in, cruising with moderns and returning an excellent 25mpg.

If you are into lounge-on-wheels luxury of the British variety then give one of these big Humbers – around for under £3000 – a try. Big cars come prettier and many are faster but you will go a long way to find a smoother, more relaxing town carriage.



From rear too, Hawk has strong Chevy look

THE V8 SNIPES

Rootes came very close to building Chrysler V8-powered Super Snipes and Imperials in 1965/66 – and got as far as producing six pre-production prototypes and commissioning engineering and literature.

Looking for cheap ways of modernising their big cars, Rootes engineers in Coventry took a Chrysler 312cu in V8 with four-barrel carburettor and fitted it to a silver-grey Super Snipe. With manual transmission and a Salisbury diff, the prototype (code name SC1) did 125mph around MIRA's test circuit, completely wearing out its R5S crossply tyres after a few laps.

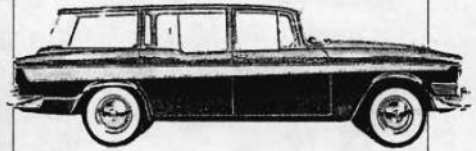
Later prototypes used a smaller 273cu in unit which, with a two-barrel carb and Torqueflite automatic transmission, offered performance that was hardly better than the production six-cylinder cars – but with added thirst. They suffered reliability problems too – cooling was marginal – and the width of the V8 meant that it had to be fitted from above, not from below as with the production 'six'.

A pilot production line was set up in March 1966 with full production planned for June and the V8 Humbers would have come with electric windows, Lucas cruise control and an automatic dipping mirror as standard. It wasn't to be: Chrysler – now in total control at Rootes – saw no profit in the project and pulled the plug. Some prototypes survive and one was used by Sir Reginald Rootes as his personal transport.

PRODUCTION

May 1957: Hawk introduced with four-cylinder 2267cc engine, four-speed manual or three-speed Borg-Warner DG automatic. Touring limousine also offered.

October 1957: Estate introduced with split tailgate, built by Carbodies of Coventry.



October 1958: six-cylinder Super Snipe announced with all-new engine, three-speed gearbox (manual or auto) plus optional power steering. Minor changes to Hawk.

October 1959: MkII Hawk introduced with side-flash and revised gear ratios. MkII Super Snipe has bigger 3-litre engine, disc front brakes, stiffer front anti-roll bar.

October 1960: Series II Super Snipe introduced with front discs, larger rear drums, redesigned front suspension and improved gearbox. PVC replaces leather interior. Series III Super Snipe has twin headlights and improved suspension.

October 1962: Series II Hawk announced with improved steering, bigger fuel tank and improved heating and ventilation. Super Snipe Series IV has opening rear quarter lights, Snipe bird motif in the grille centre, plus modified steering and transmission. Power went up from 129 to 132bhp. Both cars had restyled rear window and windscreen surrounds.

October 1964: Both Hawk (Series IV) and Super Snipe (Series V) get restyled flatter roof line. Snipe gets twin carbs, alternator to replace dynamo, modified exhaust, redesigned facia and new bumpers, plus gear change improvements. Thrupp and Maberley-trimmed Imperial introduced at the same time

Summer 1967: Production of Hawk and Super Snipe discontinued.



First Super Snipes had single headlights

Production figures:

Hawk:	Series I	'57-'59	15,539
	Series IA	'59-'60	6813
	Series II	'60-'62	7230
	Series III	'62-'64	6109
	Series IV	'64-'65	1746
	Series IVA	'65-'67	3754
Super Snipe	Series I	'58-'59	6072
	Series II	'59-'60	7175
	Series III	'60-'62	7257
	Series IV	'62-'64	6495
	Series V	'64-'65	1907
	Series VA	'65-'67	1125

ON YOUR MARQUES POST-WAR HUMBERS

1949 classic The Blue Lamp, with Jack Warner, and the less well-known 1952 film, Mother Riley Meets the Vampire. The police Humbers used in The Blue Lamp were Super Snipes, essentially warmed-up pre-war models, like nearly all the cars from British firms just after the war.

In 1945, there was one addition to the Humber range — the Hawk, which was an entry-level model based on the Hillman 14. This brought the line-up to four: Hawk, Snipe, Super Snipe and Pullman.

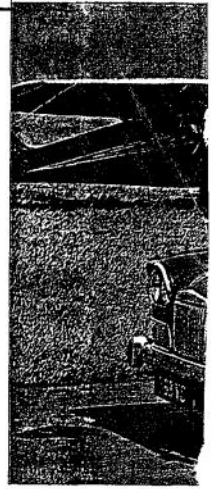
From 1945, Humbers were given Mark numbers, and in '48, a new full-width body style was introduced.

These so-called Mark Humbers, with their bulbous wings and narrow, upright grilles, lasted throughout the Fifties until the new-shape Series Humbers took over from 1957. The monocoque Series cars had a vaguely GM American look to them, and if you're into trivia, the 1960 Super Snipe Series III was the first British car to feature four headlights.

Rootes attempted to broaden the Humber appeal by bringing out a new smaller model, the Sceptre, in 1963. In typical Rootes mix 'n' match fashion, the running gear was basically Sunbeam Rapier but the bodyshell was a Hillman Super

Minx/Singer Vogue mongrel. It lasted just four years until the whole Humber range was completely shaken up for 1967.

The American company Chrysler had taken over Rootes in the mid-Sixties and was intent on making big changes. Out went the old-fashioned Hawks, Super Snipes and Imperials. The menagerie of different models that Chrysler inherited — Singer Gazelle and Vogue, Hillman Minx and Super Minx, Sunbeam Rapier and Humber Sceptre — was also culled, and resources directed into a single new platform. Its codename was Arrow series, but we remember it



PENSIONERS' OUTING

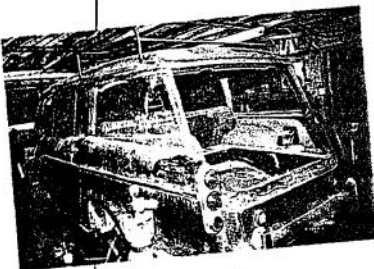
'EVERYBODY laughed at us for having the slowest car,' says Bob Johnson about his 1967 Hawk estate, 'but it's still going strong.' Still going strong, that is, after completing the 1998 London-Cape Town classic rally. Together with chums Dennis Hubble and Mike Malone — who, like Bob, are well into their Sixties — they finished the 12,500-mile event in style. 'We wanted to be as comfy as possible while travelling at 70mph,' says Bob.

With just 18 months to prepare the Humber, Bob recalls: 'It was in desperate condition. The floorpan needed plating, and we had to put some very heavy-grade oil into the engine in Africa to bring back the oil pressure, but otherwise it didn't give any trouble.'

'We lost overdrive after a week and had to have a new solenoid flown out, but otherwise the only bits that broke were the heavy-duty rear springs I'd had specially made. More amusing was running out of petrol on a Turkish motorway. We approached a truck driver for help, only to be chased away by the two women who were servicing him in the cab at the time!'

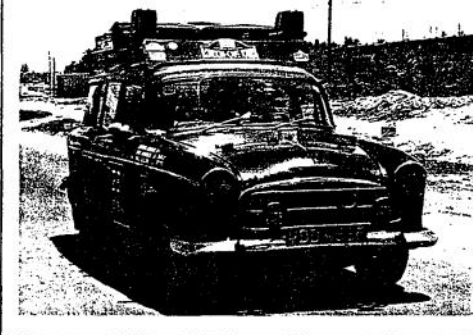
In deference to the crew's advancing years, Bob added a couple of creature comforts to the already plush cabin. Air conditioning from a Daihatsu Sportrak was fitted, along with front seats from a Volvo 760.

'They awarded us the Pensioners' Trophy at the finish!' laughs Bob. 'I think we came in about 12th or 13th, but it doesn't really matter. Getting there was the important thing.'



LEFT: Hawk estate was a bit of a shed when bought, but proved to be very reliable.

BELOW: Bob Johnson and his crew travelled in cool style on the 1998 London-Cape Town Rally.



HUMBER-COVER

THE SUNBEAM Tiger wasn't the only V8-powered car that Rootes flirted with in the mid-Sixties. About a dozen Humber Super Snipes/Imperials — and a solitary Sceptre — were equipped with Chrysler V8 engines by the factory's experimental department.

The one and only Sceptre was cut up, but of the dozen or so Snipes and Imperials that were converted, at least four survive; possibly more.

Two of them are in the hands of one man, Keith Bagnall. 'It's generally accepted there were six prototypes and six pre-production cars,' he says, 'and I'm pretty certain that my prototype is the only one to have escaped from the factory.'

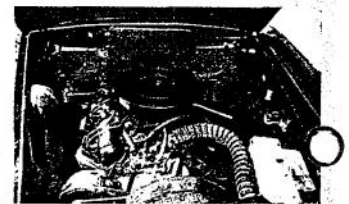
'Registered EHP 622C, it went to America in the Eighties and was re-imported in 1998. Sadly, the original engine disappeared long ago.'

'My other V8 is a pre-production Imperial, GDU 492D, which was used by Sir Reginald Rootes. The 115,000 recorded miles were apparently racked up by Sir Reginald on long continental trips.'

At least one of the big V8 Humbers was fitted with a 318cu in (5.2-litre) Chrysler engine, but this was considered too powerful and too thirsty, so the majority received 273cu in (4.5-litre) blocks instead.

Keith suspects that his prototype may have the bigger motor, however.

'It definitely feels a lot quicker than a standard car, and you can



Like most of the experimental V8 Humbers, the Imperial's engine is a 273cu in Chrysler.

lose traction at 40mph if you boot the throttle. However, the handling is actually better because the V8 engine is lighter and shorter than the Humber straight six.'

Apart from the two other V8 prototypes known to exist, one in the Hounslow area and one in Australia, Keith reckons there could be a few more still waiting to be discovered.

'There's a rumour that one car was fitted with the 4-litre Rolls-Royce FB60 engine. Now that really would be a special find.'



Keith Bagnall says the V8 Imperial (below) is in poor condition. It was once Sir Reginald Rootes' personal transport.



LEFT: Super Snipe is believed to be the only prototype — as opposed to pre-production — V8 to have escaped the factory.



V8 into 4 didn't go...

Above: what might have been — Chrysler's styling sketch for a Tiger replacement with more than a hint of the late 1960s Dodge Charger around the rear three-quarters

In the early 1960s, when big — in terms of engine capacity — was beautiful, American V8 power units offered the solution to many a British motor manufacturer's quest for sheer power. However, of the larger companies, only the Rootes Group took advantage of this source for uprating the models in their range.

The Sunbeam Alpine was Rootes' answer to the MGA and first appeared in October 1959. Powered by a 1494cc ohv engine which produced 78bhp at 5000rpm, the car's performance was respectable rather than spectacular. Its maximum speed was about 100mph and acceleration from 0-60 took some 14secs. Then, in 1960, the Alpine's engine was increased in capacity to 1592cc which upped the power to 80bhp, but this did little to improve its performance. If anything, the Mk 11 was slightly slower. Clearly, a more radical approach was needed if the Alpine was to stand any chance at all, particularly in America, in the competitive market of sports/tourers.

Rootes' development engineers began looking at the options available for increasing the Alpine's performance. The four cylinder 2.2-litre Humber Hawk engine was too big and heavy and its power output at 73bhp was no more than the Alpine's. So in desperation, the team looked at engines produced by other manufacturers. With a directive from the Rootes Board, they tried the 1600cc twin ohc Alfa Romeo unit and the 2½-litre V8 Daimler engine, but because of their size, neither proved suitable, needing extensive surgery to the bulkhead for them to fit. Even Jack Brabham became involved with the project suggesting that one of the V8 engines from the States would prove the answer. But, without any tangible evidence of how this kind of transplant would work, the idea was rejected.

In fact, the evidence needed to persuade the Rootes board to adopt the V8 technique was to

When Chrysler took over Rootes they tried to insert their big V8s into everything in sight, from Super Snipes to Sceptres!

Story by Mike Taylor

come from Rootes' own sales manager in California. A prototype Sunbeam Alpine fitted with a 4.2-litre Ford engine with manual transmission was prepared by Carroll Shelby in California; the car was then shipped over to England where it was tested by the Rootes executives. Immediately the concept was accepted as being a winner, so, against a background of rising financial problems, a deal was signed with the Ford Motor Company to supply engines and transmission units.

The Alpine could take a V8

What made the Alpine bodysell so appropriate for accepting the larger Ford power units was its inherent strength. The Alpine monocoque structure was based on the floorpan of the Hillman Husky and while its wheelbase/track ratio was not ideal for outstanding roadholding, the underside had been braced with a cruxiform box section thereby adding rigidity. Further, during its development, the Alpine had been fitted with stays between the scuttle and inner wings, the result being a body quite capable of handling the 258ft.lb of torque delivered by the 4.2-litre Ford engine.

By 1964, Rootes' financial situation was becoming acute. Putting the Hillman Imp, Rootes' baby car, into production had been a major drain, and a crippling industrial dispute at British Light Steel Pressings (one of Rootes' body suppliers) had also been a costly business. Eventually, rescue came in the form of a contract between Rootes and the Chrysler

Corporation, giving Chrysler a percentage of Rootes' voting and non-voting shares while at the same time providing much needed cash with which Rootes could maintain production.

The Tiger's first public appearance was at the New York Show in April 1964 where its performance allied to a competitive price ensured it a good reception. Production began at Jensen's Kelvin Way factory in June that year and soon the car was being featured in motor magazines on both sides of the Atlantic. The late Gregor Grant of *Autosport* was one enthusiast who spoke highly of the Alpine with the V8 power unit. "The Tiger costs £1195 plus £250 10s 5d PT", he said. "Not a great deal to pay for such a splendid motor-car, which, when the word gets round, must sell in ever-increasing numbers".

The comparative performance between the Alpine Mk IV and the Tiger were as follows:

Sunbeam Alpine Mk IV (1592cc)	Sunbeam Tiger 4.2
0-30mph 4.4sec	3.2sec
0-40mph 6.1sec	5.0sec
0-50mph 10.2sec	6.8sec
0-60mph 13.8sec	9.5sec
0-70mph 19.6sec	12.4sec
0-80mph 30.6sec	17.5sec
Maximum speed 95mph	117mph
Fuel consumption 23mpg	16.9mpg

Rootes cars occupied an important percentage of the British car market and they were particularly pleased at the way the Tiger was beginning to increase in popularity. Indeed, they were bitten by the V8 'bug' and felt there had to be other cars in their range which would benefit from a V8 transplant. The Rootes Board asked the Product Planning Division to carry out an analysis and come up with some suggestions. The two models which were chosen were the Humber Sceptre and the

substantial Humber Super Snipe/Imperial.

The reason for choosing these two models was simple. The Sceptre was aimed at the fast semi-luxury saloon market, yet it could barely reach 90mph; a V8 power unit would increase its performance dramatically. The Super Snipe/Imperial also badly needed uprating and it was thought that a V8 engine would give the kind of effortless performance more in keeping with the Super Snipe's image.

A contract between Rootes and Jensen Motors of West Bromwich provided the necessary know-how to undertake development and the low volume assembly facilities to put the Alpine V8 into production.

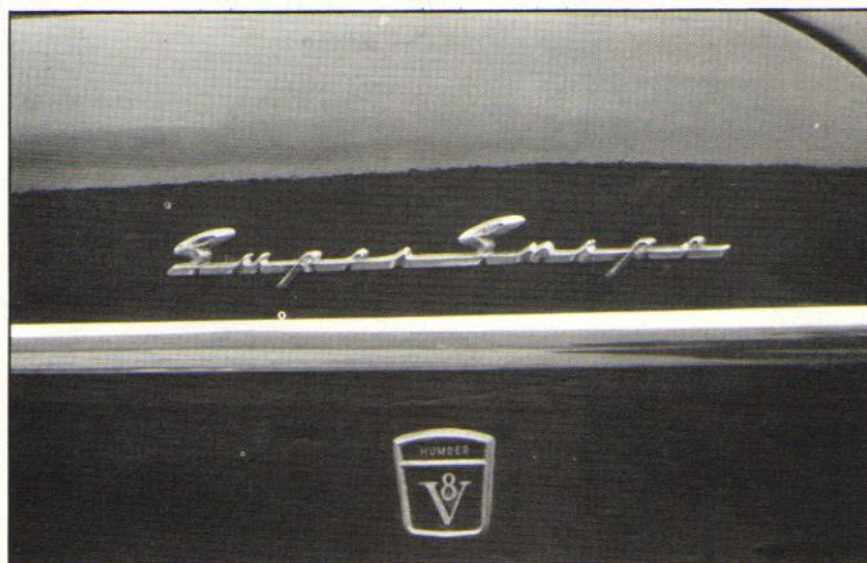
Bigger engine for the Tiger

Meanwhile, by early 1965, Rootes' development engineers were well advanced on the Mk 11 Tiger programme. Supplies of the smaller 4.2-litre (260cu.in) engine were running out so the second generation of Tigers would feature the 4.7-litre (289cu.in) unit. In addition to making small cosmetic changes, like the move to an egg-crate grille and chrome wing embellishers, Tiger 11 would have 10.7in discs on the front and 9.7in discs on the rear together with 14in road wheels. Cars for the States would also have black and white side flashes.

With the approval of the Rootes Board, the development engineers began selecting engines for their V8 saloon programme. With the link which now existed between Coventry and Chrysler, it was decided to utilise a Chrysler unit if possible rather than a Ford engine. In the event, the unit chosen for the Sceptre was the 273cu.in, 4.4-litre 'Barracuda' V8. With a four-barrel carburettor and a compression ratio of 10.5:1, it produced 196bhp at 5100rpm. This drove through a 'Torqueflite' automatic transmission to a Salisbury 3.07:1 differential. The brakes and suspension were to be identical to that used on the Tiger 11 complete with Panhard rod on the rear axle. Externally, the car looked like any other Humber Sceptre except that the twin headlight



This composite picture, with a Sceptre grille on a Super Minx, is roughly what the V8 Sceptre looked like



Discreet: the only give-away from the outside of the V8-engined Super Snipe was this front wing badge



Not what it seems: this is one of the 12 — the exact figure is uncertain — pre-production V8 Super Snipes

system had been replaced by the single lights of the Super Minx.

The result of this modification was nothing short of dramatic. All those who worked on the V8 Sceptre project enthused over its performance. In a straight line its acceleration compared to the 1600cc model was shattering.

	Humber		
	Sceptre	Sunbeam	Tiger 11
	(1600cc)	V8 (auto)	
0-30mph	4.9sec	3.3sec	3.0sec
0-40mph	7.7sec	4.7sec	4.2sec
0-50mph	16.6sec	6.7sec	6.2sec
0-60mph	17.1sec	9.1sec	7.8sec
0-70mph	23.5sec	11.6sec	10.8sec
0-80mph	35.9sec	15.2sec	13.7sec
Max. speed	90mph	133mph	125mph
Fuel Con.	22.5mpg	20.2mpg	22.5mpg

The figures tell their own story. But there were several major drawbacks. The body surgery necessary to allow the engine to fit into the Sceptre's shell disrupted the car's interior considerably and it would have been impossible to use the old transmission tunnel/dashboard arrangements on production cars. Also, with so much weight over the front wheels, steering was very heavy at low speeds and the handling suffered from understeer. In the event, the one and only prototype was cut up, much to the disappointment of the development engineers.



There was sufficient space under the bonnet of the Snipe for a V8 to fit without major body modifications

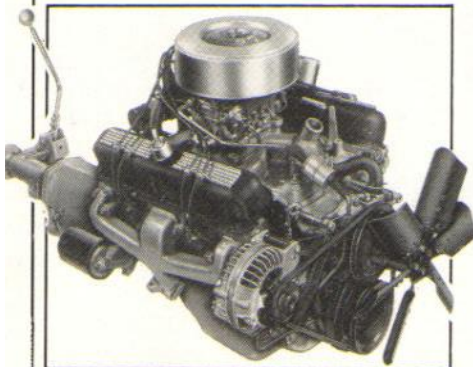
decided to protect their interests and increase their shares in Rootes' operations. At a stroke, the Snipe/Imperial range was discontinued after 2856 units had been built. Production of the Sunbeam Tiger too, with its Ford V8 engine was withdrawn after a total of 7067 had been made. However, Chrysler were anxious that the Tiger should remain in production, at least for a while, but using one of their engines.

Chrysler's V8 didn't fit

Accordingly, arrangements were made for one of the development cars to be fitted with a 273cu.in engine. But it was useless. The Chrysler unit did not share the same narrow 'V' banks compact design and front mounted distributor which was a feature of the Ford engine and which therefore made it ideal for fitting in the Alpine's bodysell. Producing a Chrysler-engined Tiger would have required new inner wing and bulkhead pressings and, with the cost of the necessary re-tooling, it was not considered viable.

But despite this setback, Chrysler design studios in Detroit continued to produce several possible shapes for an 'all new' Tiger but, again, the projects fell by the wayside through lack of finance. In fact, Chrysler's stringent rationalisation programme left no room for any new sports models and the cars which were to carry the name of Alpine and Rapier into the late 1960s were merely modified saloons in coupé form.

Without doubt, the stories behind Rootes venture into the world of V8 powered vehicles makes interesting reading. Within Rootes during this period were two schools of thought: On the one hand were those who wanted to expand the range into the fringe area of 'enthusiast' cars and low volume, high-performance luxury models, which were inevitably costly and time consuming to develop. On the other hand there were those who felt that Rootes should concentrate their efforts on high volume, bread-and-butter saloons which were financially more beneficial. Although the second course of action would have been better for the company, had it not been for the pioneering spirit we would not have been left with such a legacy of interesting models. □



The V8's width made it too big for the small cars

series production. It seems that among the many snags encountered on the pilot line was the difficulty of installing the engine, which had to be effected from above rather than by offering it up from beneath which was the more normal practice. Moreover, fitted with the two-barrel carburettor, power output was a miserable 150bhp at 4400rpm, only 21bhp more than the standard Super Snipe. Therefore, performance was equally unimpressive.

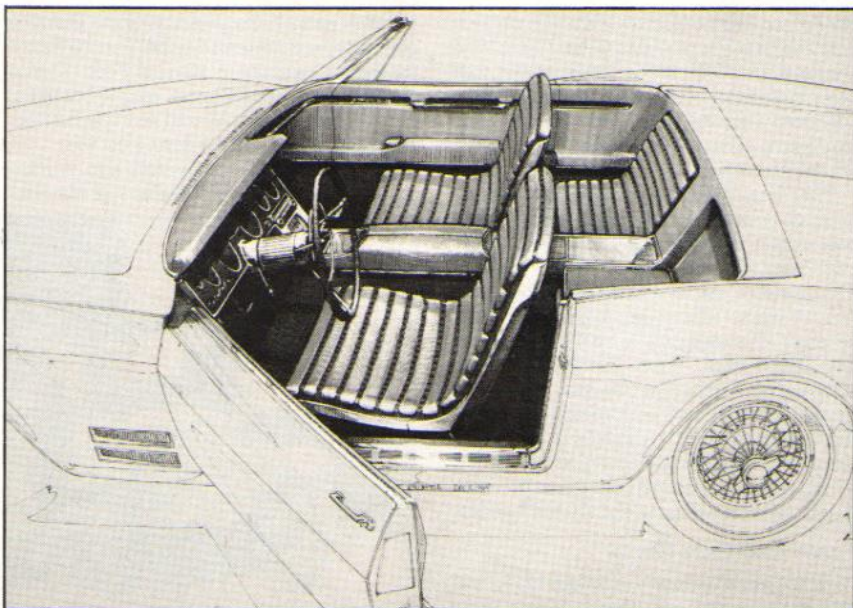
Super Snipe V8		Standard Super Snipe
0-30mph	4.0sec	5.5sec
0-40mph	6.4sec	8.3sec
0-50mph	9.4sec	12.3sec
0-60mph	13.0sec	16.1sec
0-70mph	17.9sec	23.1sec
0-80mph	23.1sec	30.3sec
Max. speed	102mph	99mph
Fuel con.	16.4mpg	19.7mpg

During 1965 and 1966 Rootes continued to make financial losses and in 1967 Chrysler

The Super Snipe/Imperial programme was more adventurous. Six prototype cars were made in all, the first having a 5.1-litre (318cu.in) Chrysler engine with manual transmission. Performance was dramatic, with a maximum speed of over 125mph. But this was considered a little too powerful, added to which fuel consumption was equally impressive! So this engine was taken out and replaced by a smaller 273cu.in unit, again with manual transmission. The other five cars were also tested with 273 engines, some with two-barrel and others with four-barrel carburettors. But after suffering several head gasket failures on the more powerful four-barrel engines, it was decided to continue development with the two-barrel cars only. Of the remaining five cars, one was an Imperial, which had Armstrong Selectoride dampers on the rear, and another was left hand drive.

Although fitting the V8 engine into the Snipe bay was straightforward enough, the installation did call for a certain amount of modification to exhaust systems, radiators and the routing of the brake pipes. After many months of testing during 1965, the go-ahead was given for a pilot assembly line to be set up where it is thought a further six (this figure is uncertain because of the lack of records) pre-production cars were made.

But even after reaching this advanced stage, the Humber Super Snipe V8 was never to reach



Another sketch of the interior of the Tiger replacement date 1964, three years before production ended